

separation and recovery steps. This combination of features is not taught or suggested by either Van Acker alone or in combination with Young.

Van Acker is focused on the production of ethyl acetate and butyl acetate only. No suggestion of producing product streams of ethyl acetate and isopropyl acetate is made. Because of differences between butyl acetate and isopropyl acetate and the varying relative difference of each from ethyl acetate, it cannot be presumed that one could simply use a process designed for the production and recovery of ethyl acetate and butyl acetate to produce and recover ethyl acetate and isopropyl acetate. Indeed, as explained in the specification and set forth in the newly submitted claims a different process is necessary.

For example, the recovery process scheme recited in the claims includes a three distillation column combination to recover the ethyl acetate and isopropyl acetate product streams following removal of the products in the overhead from the reaction zone. As set forth in the claims, the ethyl acetate product is removed as an overhead from the second distillation column. The isopropyl acetate product is recovered as the bottom stream from the third distillation column. In contrast, Van Acker proposes a two distillation column recover scheme. A careful review of Van Acker reveals that the third distillation column (D) does not recover product but is used to simply separate water from dissolved organic materials. See, page 14. Van Acker recovers both ester products from the second distillation column (E).

Thus, a feature of the present invention is that ethyl acetate and isopropyl acetate may be co-produced and then recovered as high purity products by removing the products from the overhead of the reactor and then recovering them in a specific recovery scheme. The recited invention goes beyond just simply co-producing the esters as the Office Action contends is suggested by Van Acker and Young. Van Acker does not suggest the recited recovery scheme but teaches away from the recited scheme by expressly proposing a different recovery scheme.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, claims 11-19 are believed to be in condition for allowance. Consideration of these claims with issuance of an early Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

It is believed that this submission is fully responsive to the outstanding Office Action. However, should any issues remain unresolved, the Examiner is encouraged to

U.S. Serial No. 09/740,224

contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below so that all matters may be expeditiously resolved.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Date: DEC-05, 2003